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Housekeepers' Chat Friday, May 10, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home." Information, including one recipe, from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home."

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To can, or not to can? It all depends, Priscilla. It all depends on conditions in your household. Canning is no longer looked upon as an end in itself -- surely it would be foolish to cut down on our supply of fresh vegetables and fruits, simply for the sake of having more canned food in our cellars.

But suppose, Priscilla, that you and your thrifty husband have been very wise, in planting orchard and garden, and that you will have a surplus of fruits and vegetables. Under these circumstances, canning is a desirable method of saving your extra fruits, and many of the vegetables. Of course you won't waste your time canning vegetables which may be stored, such as mature beets, turnips, carrots, sweet potatoes, parsnips, winter squash, and pumpkin, or those that may be dried, such as okra, and large Lima beans. In some cases, you may want to can small quantities of such vegetables, to use in the late spring and early summer, when the stored ones aren't so good, and the new crop isn't ready.

Every year, thousands of women in the United States ask the same question of the United States Bureau of Home Economics. The question is this: "What is the quickest, easiest, and surest method of home canning the surplus from my garden and orchard?"

Here is the answer: "Pack your foods, especially vegetables, boiling hot, and process every vegetable, except tomatoes, under steam pressure."

This answer is O. K., as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough for the inexperienced homemaker.

The hot pack method is a quick and easy method, which combines all the good points of the other popular methods, and has some special advantages of its own.

Briefly, the hot pack method is to wash and otherwise prepare the vegetable or fruit for canning, cook it for 10 to 15 minutes in water or sirup, in a kettle, pack it boiling hot into the glass jars or tin cans, and process in the water bath, or pressure canner, according to the time and temperature recommended.

Processing means heating the vegetable, or fruit, to kill the bacteria. The short cooking of the fruit or vegetable, before it is put into the jar or can, wilts and shrinks it so that it can be packed more easily. It drives out the air, and makes exhausting unnecessary. Most important of all, the food packed boiling hot, into the jars or cans, and put at once into the hot canner, reaches the temperature required for processing far sooner than if it were packed cold, and makes possible shorter processing periods. Moreover, if the hot pack method is used, heat penetrates more uniformly during canning, and the food in the center of the jar is more likely to be properly processed, This cuts down the chances of spoilage, for it is proper processing, more than all else, that determines whether canned goods keep or spoil.

Processing, as I said before, means heating material to kill the bacteria.

Here is another question, which has often been asked: "Just why is the hot pack method of canning any better than the old-fashioned open-kettle method?"

As I have explained, hot pack in home canning means packing fruits and vegetables in the cans, or glass jars, ready for processing in boiling water, or under steam pressure; it is not a complete method of canning. The hot pack helps to cut down the chances of spoilage, but it is the processing that destroys the most troublesome bacteria.

The hot pack is not a rival of the old-fashioned open-kettle canning. By that method, the food was cooked in an open vessel until tender, and supposedly free from bacteria. Then the food was filled into sterilized jars, sealed air-tight, and stored. Unfortunately, into the jars, along with the food, went bacteria from the air, from ladles used in filling, and sometimes from hands, or cloths that accidentally got in the way. Sometimes these bacteria were sufficient to cause spoilage, and sometimes not. It was chiefly a matter of luck. The hot pack, followed by processing in water-bath or steam-pressure canner, is a much more reliable method. The heat of processing kills the bacteria that were in the food, when it was packed, and the air-tight seal prevents more bacteria from entering.

Now I know that my description of the hot pack may be far from clear, to the young housewife who knows nothing about canning. I suggest that she send for the bulletin on "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home." The directions given in this bulletin are concise. A series of pictures shows the steps in canning, in glass jars and tin cans. The bulletin includes directions and time tables of handling the various fruits and vegetables, from apples to strawberries, and from asparagus to sweet potatoes. The name, again, is "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home." A knowledge of reliable methods of canning may save two or three dozen jars of fruit next winter, when fresh fruit is hard to find.

While we're on the subject of canning, I might as well answer one more question: "Is it necessary to buy new rubber rings, every season?"

The answer is yes. It is penny wise and pound foolish to use the same rubber rings twice, and jars of spoiled instead of sweet canned foods may be the result of such false economy. The rubber ring is all-important to the air-tight seal in a glass jar. The best new rubber rings therefore are none too good for home canning. Do you remember the test for rubber rings? The simplest test is to double the rings together, and press the fold with the finger. The rubber should not crack, under this treatment. Rings should also stretch to twice their length, and return, without change of shape.

The next question is from a woman who wants to know how to can asparagus. I'm sending her the canning bulletin, which answers her question in the best way possible.

I see here's a request for directions for canning rhubarb -- same bulletin will be sent. And here's another, from a radio friend who wants to know whether rhubarb makes jelly. Certainly it does. Young tender rhubarb of mild flavor, makes a good tart jelly. Fine to serve with meats, in the winter time.

As I told you the other day, it's necessary to add pectin, either home-made or commercial, to the rhubarb juice, to make a firm jelly. I'll be glad to send you directions for making two kinds of pectin, apple and lemon. The lemon pectin, with the rhubarb, gives an unusually attractive color.

I'm not going to give you a menu today -- let's pretend we've all been invited out for dinner. Wouldn't it be a relief, sometimes, when we can't think of a thing to cook, to be invited out to dinner? As Aunt Het says, "I like home, but I like to go visitin' once in a while, just to eat vittles I didn't have to fix."

I don't have a menu, as I said before, but I do have a recipe which somebody asked for last week. It's a recipe for Sour Cream Frosting. Better write it in your notebooks, for future reference. Only five ingredients, for Sour Cream Frosting:

3 tablespoons butter
1-1/2 cups confectioners sugar
3 tablespoons sour cream
1/8 teaspoon salt, and
1/4 teaspoon vanilla

Five ingredients, for Sour Cream Frosting: (Repeat).

Cream the butter. Add the sugar. Mix until thoroughly blended, and smooth. Add the cream, salt, and vanilla. Beat well. This quantity of frosting will be sufficient for a two layer cake of standard size.

That's all for today, and I hope the cream sours so we can try the cake frosting.

Monday: "Ivy Poisoning - How to Prevent It."

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